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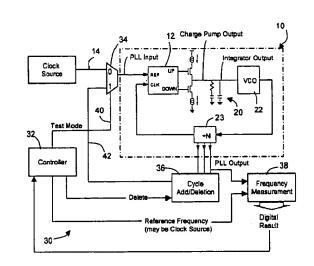
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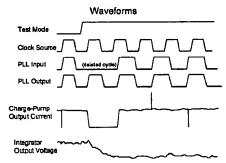
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(54) Titre: METHODE ET CIRCUIT D'AUTOCONTROLE INTEGRE DE BOUCLES DE VERROUILLAGE DE PHASE (54) Title: METHOD AND CIRCUIT FOR BUILT IN SELF TEST OF PHASE LOCKED LOOPS





(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

A method of testing phase locked loops (PLL) and a testing circuit comprising the steps of applying a normal stimulus signal whose frequency is within the lock range of the PLL to the input of the PLL, substituting the normal input stimulus with an





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(57) Abrégé(suite)/Abstract(continued):

alternative signal derived from an internal feedback of the PLL, adding or deleting one or more cycles from the alternative signal and observing the response of the PLL to the alternative signal. Variations of the method allow for determining Gain-Bandwidth product, lock range, lock time, Bit Error Rate, Jitter and other parameters which can then be compared with predetermined values to determine whether the PLL is properly functional.

Abstract

A method of testing phase locked loops (PLL) and a testing circuit comprising the steps of applying a normal stimulus signal whose frequency is within the lock range of the PLL to the input of the PLL, substituting the normal input stimulus with an alternative signal derived from an internal feedback of the PLL, adding or deleting one or more cycles from the alternative signal and observing the response of the PLL to the alternative signal. Variations of the method allow for determining Gain-Bandwidth product, lock range, lock time, Bit Error Rate, Jitter and other parameters which can then be compared with predetermined values to determine whether the PLL is properly functional.

The present invention relates, in general, to testing of Phase Locked Loops and, more specifically, to a method and circuitry for Built In Self Test (BIST) of Phase Locked Loops incorporated into integrated circuits.

5 Background of the Invention

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Phase locked loops (PLLs) are used in many electronics applications. Some are used to derive a synchronous clock signal from serial data, some are used to derive a higher frequency synchronous clock signal from a lower frequency clock, and some are used to generate a delayed clock signal whose phase is aligned to a clock signal with the same frequency. PLLs are used in many digital integrated circuits, but are partially analog or mixed-signal in nature. Their performance is thus non-deterministic and testing them in a manufacturing environment can often be time-consuming or inadequate, especially if only conventional synchronous digital tests are used.

The most important PLL parameters which are typically tested include lock time, lock range, phase jitter, phase error, and the induced bit error rate (BER). As is done for most mixed-signal functions, these parameters are typically measured functionally, i.e. by applying stimulus that the PLL would be subjected to in the target application and measuring its response. These tests can be time-consuming to create, require long test times, and require high precision testers. For example, lock range is typically measured, after phase lock has been achieved, by gradually increasing or decreasing the stimulus frequency until the phase is no longer locked. This requires a tester with precise control of signal transition timing. BER is measured over extended periods of time (minutes or hours), or else a low-level signal with a precise amplitude is used to induce an increased BER. This requires a tester with precise output voltages, possibly at high frequencies.

Summary of the Invention

It is an object of this invention to provide a circuit and method for testing PLLs in a way which is comparable to tests which are typically used, but in a way which is simple enough to economically include within an integrated circuit containing the PLL and thus facilitate built-in self-test (BIST). The BIST circuit described herein is connected only to the normal input and output signals of the PLL, hence does not interfere with internal circuitry, does not affect the normal capabilities of the PLL, and

does not depend on whether the PLL's internal operation is digital or analog. This contrasts significantly with, for example, U.S. Patent 5,295,079 by Hee Wong et al, which requires several connections to the internal circuitry of the PLL, and in a way which is very dependent on the exact nature of the PLL.

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To test a PLL, the new BIST circuit described herein is connected to the PLL and an input stimulus clock with mid-range frequency for the PLL is also connected. The BIST circuit provides a substitute clock input derived from the PLL output clock and has the same phase and frequency as the stimulus clock to the PLL. When the circuit is enabled, the PLL continues to generate approximately the same frequency. The feedback clock is then interrupted for one or more cycles. The output frequency of the PLL responds to these missing cycles in a way which is precisely proportional to the product of the loop gain and the loop bandwidth for the PLL. The change in frequency is easily measured using conventional means, on-chip. The loop Gain Bandwidth is proportional to the square of the natural frequency, f_n , of the PLL. f_n is an important PLL design parameter.

The lock range of the PLL is measured similarly to the above procedure, except that the derived signal is continuously interrupted, causing the output frequency of the PLL to continuously decrease until it reaches its lowest possible frequency. This frequency is measured using conventional means, and is equal to the lowest frequency within the lock range of the PLL. A similar procedure leads to the highest frequency. When the lowest or highest frequency is attained, the stimulus clock is reconnected and the time to attain phase lock is measured by counting clock pulses – this give the lock time.

The jitter within the PLL is measured by connecting an edge-triggered latch between the input clock and the output clock and determining the amount of delay which must be added to or removed from the clock signal to ensure that the output of the latch is a predictable series of ones and zeroes.

For a receiver whose data clock is generated from the received data, the BER is predicted by testing the BER for various, precisely added phase offsets. When the phase offset becomes large relative to the normal offset, the BER becomes much worse than normal and can be measured in a much shorter time. Knowing several exact phase offsets and resulting BERs, the BER can be predicted for zero phase offset. A problem with this approach has been the difficulty in

generating small and precise increments in phase – the method of the present invention achieves the needed precision.

Brief Description of the Drawings

- These and other features of the invention will become more apparent from the following description in which reference is made to the appended drawings wherein:
 - Figure 1 diagrammatically illustrates a typical charge-pump type PLL;
 - Figure 2 diagrammatically illustrates a typical Exor type PLL;
- Figure 3 diagrammatically illustrates a test circuit for a charge-pump PLL and corresponding waveforms according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention;
 - Figure 4 is a flow chart illustrating method, according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, of measuring the Loop Gain-Bandwidth Product for a Charge Pump type PLL;
 - Figure 5, located adjacent Figure 3 diagrammatically illustrates a test circuit, according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, for an Exortype PLL and corresponding waveforms;
- Figure 6 is a flow chart illustrating method, according to a preferred embodiment of
 the present invention, of measuring the Loop Gain-Bandwidth Product for an
 Exor type PLL;
 - Figure 7 is a flow chart illustrating method, according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, of measuring the Lock Range for a Charge Pump type PLL;
- 25 Figure 8 is a flow chart illustrating method, according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, of measuring the Lock Range for an Exor type PLL;
 - Figure 9 diagrammatically illustrates a test circuit, according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, for measuring Bit Error Rate and corresponding waveforms;
- Figure 10 is a flow chart illustrating method, according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, of measuring the Bit Error Rate of a PLL;
 - Figure 11 diagrammatically illustrates a test circuit, according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, for measuring phase jitter and corresponding waveforms;

- Figure 12, located adjacent Figure 9, is a flow chart illustrating method, according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, of measuring the phase jitter of a PLL;
- Figure 13 diagrammatically illustrates a tapped delay line circuit used in the phase jitter measuring circuit of Figure 11;
- Figure 14 diagrammatically illustrates a bit error rate counter circuit used in the phase jitter circuit of Figure 11;

- Figure 15 diagrammatically illustrates a Frequency Measurement Logic Circuit;
- Figure 16 diagrammatically illustrates a Cycle Deletion circuit for eliminating a single cycle from a clock signal and corresponding waveforms; and
 - **Figure 17** diagrammatically illustrates a Cycle Addition/Deletion circuit for adding or eliminating a single cycle from a clock signal and corresponding waveforms according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

Detailed Description of Preferred Embodiments of the Invention

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There are several types of phase comparators used in PLLs.

Figure 1 illustrates a PLL 10 having a phase comparator 12 which has a reference input 14 and a feedback input 16 and provides a three-state output 18 to an integrator 20 which drives a voltage controlled oscillator (VCO) 22. The output of the VCO is input to a +N divider 23 from which three PLL outputs and the feedback input 16 are derived. When no phase error exists, the output of the phase comparator is high impedance. The most common example is a phase-frequency sensitive phase comparator based on digital latches and is called a charge-pump phase comparator.

Figure 2 illustrates a PLL 10 having a second type of phase comparator 24 which provides a two-state output 26 to a low pass filter 28 which drives the VCO 22. As in the PLL of Figure 1, the output of the VCO is input to a +N divider 23 from which three PLL outputs and the feedback input 16 are derived. When there is no phase error, the output alternates between logic high and low with a constant duty cycle (50% when at the middle of the frequency range). The most common example of this type of phase comparator is the simple exclusive-or (Exor) logic gate 29, shown in Figure 2, which is sensitive to phase error and not frequency error.

The invention described herein requires different operation depending on which type of phase comparator is used. The description will address the charge pump-type PLL first, and will later address the minor modifications needed to address the Exor-type PLL.

As mentioned earlier, there are primarily three different applications for PLLs. Two applications are clock generation at a different frequency or phase relative to an input clock. A third application is generation of a sampling clock from an input serial data stream containing noise so as to facilitate optimal sampling of the data values. The present invention addresses all three applications.

To begin testing a PLL, power is applied and a continuous clock input is provided at any frequency within the nominal lock range of the PLL, preferably in the center of the range. For PLLs which normally receive data (from which a clock is to be derived), the data provided is alternating 1's and 0's so as to appear as a clock whose frequency is one-half the data rate. The data provided can also be normal data or a pseudo random bit stream.

The following description describes circuits and methods for measuring Loop Gain-bandwidth Product (GBW) Charge Pump-Type and Exor-Type PLLs. It should to be understood at the outset that the circuitry described below is intended to be built into an integrated circuit in order to provide built-in self-test capabilities. As is well known to those skilled in the art, integrated circuits are designed means of a Hardware Development Language (HDL). Thus, the HDL code and the programs which utilize the code to develop the gate level circuitry determine the precise configuration of the circuitry and the integrated circuit and of the BIST circuits described herein. As indicated earlier, the present invention describes methods for measuring several PLL parameters. Not all of the parameters need to be measured in all integrated circuits. The parameters which are measured depend on the wishes of circuit designer who may be constrained by cost. Thus, the drawings illustrated herein are in the form of functional block diagrams.

15 Measurement of GBW for Charge Pump-type PLL

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Reference will now be made to the block-level diagram in Figures 3 and 4, which illustrate a test circuit and a flow diagram respectively, according to one embodiment of the present invention. The test circuit, generally designated by reference numeral 30, includes a control circuit or controller 32, a multiplexer 34, a cycle addition/deletion circuit 36, illustrated in Figure 16, and a frequency measurement circuit 38, illustrated in Figure 15. Multiplexer 34 is controlled by a Test Mode signal 40 provided by controller 32 and receives the clock input 14 and a feedback clock signal 42 output by the cycle addition/deletion circuit 36. A nominal frequency stimulus (clock or data) is normally applied to the input of the PLL by the controller applying a low level signal to the multiplexer (step 46) in Figure 4.

Self-test can typically begin only when the PLL output frequency is locked to the input frequency. Many PLLs have a phase lock output which indicates when the output phase is locked to the input phase. This 'Lock' signal can be used in test mode to initiate self-test. Alternatively, a frequency 'valid' detector (not shown) can be incorporated into controller 32 to generate an output logic signal whenever the output frequency of the PLL is within a chosen bandwidth around the input frequency. The detector can reduce test time by initiating self-test before the PLL has locked to the phase or frequency of the input signal. Thus, under the control of controller 32, the first steps in the self-test process is to either measure the VCO

frequency or observe the PLL 'Lock' signal (step 48) and determine whether the frequency is within a predetermined range or the PLL has output a 'Lock' signal (step 50).

When the PLL output frequency is valid, the controller outputs a logic high 5 Test Mode signal to the control input of multiplexer 34 to select the feedback clock input 16 instead of the input clock 14 (step 52). At this point, the feedback clock is the same as the clock fed back into the phase comparator 12 within the PLL, and therefore the phase error becomes approximately zero. The output of the phase comparator becomes high impedance, and the output voltage of the charge pump integrator 20 becomes approximately constant, as shown in Figure 3. Typically, there will be some phase error and the integrator output voltage will slowly increase or decrease. Immediately after entering this mode, the output clock frequency is measured over a time interval T and the result is denoted for (step 54). The frequency is then immediately measured again (step 56) over another time interval T, and the result is denoted f_1 . The value of f_1-f_0 is representative of the magnitude of the frequency drift due to various sources, including the phase error introduced by It is also possible to measure fo while the PLL is in the Lock the test circuitry. state; however, the value of f₁-f₀ will be one-half of the value compared to the method just described.

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Next, under the control of controller 32, cycle addition/deletion circuit 36 eliminates a single cycle (step 58) from the feedback clock and then there is a pause (step 60) for a few cycles to permit transients to settle. Immediately after the cycle is eliminated, the output clock frequency is again measured over a time interval T and the result is denoted f_2 (step 62). The value of $(f_2-f_1)-(f_1-f_0)$ is representative of the change in frequency due to the single pulse deletion and can be shown to be proportional to the loop GBW of the PLL. This value is determined (step 64) and compared to a predetermined value (step 66), which results in a 'Pass' or 'Fail' condition. The controller then re-enables the normal input via the multiplexer (step 68).

In some cases, the frequency change caused by a single cycle deletion is too small to accurately measure in the chosen time interval T. In these cases, two or more cycles can be deleted, and the result will be proportionally larger. In other cases, deleting even a single cycle causes excessive frequency shift. In these cases, a portion of a cycle can be deleted - for example, a quarter or an eighth of

the cycle can be precisely deleted using synchronous logic. Alternatively, a combinational logic gate delay can be used to delete a constant interval of time from a cycle, and the delay of the logic gate can be measured using other means.

Another, more direct method for introducing phase shift is to use synchronous logic to continuously delay the feedback signal by 90°, 45°, 22.5° or some other angle equal to 360°/2°, where n is some positive integer. However, this method is only practical when the divide ratio (N in Figure 1) is large enough to permit digital generation of the necessary delay, and when the loop GBW is not so high that the integrator output voltage goes into saturation before the frequency is measured. In general, deleting one cycle causes a 180° (or 360°, depending on phase comparator design) phase step, which decreases the output frequency the same amount as a 1° phase error for 180 (or 360) cycles.

In summary, the method described above first connects the loop feedback signal into both inputs of the phase comparator so that its output becomes independent of the VCO output and hence the PLL is tested in open-loop mode. Next, a phase error is introduced for one or more clock cycles, and the resulting change in output frequency is proportional to the loop GBW.

Measurement of Loop GBW for Exor-type PLL

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Reference will now be made to the block-level diagram of Figure 5, which illustrates a test circuit 80 for measuring Loop GBW for an Exor-type PLL illustrated in Figure 2, and to Figure 6, which is a flow chart for measuring the GBW for an Exor-type PLL according to a preferred embodiment of the invention. As with test circuit 30, test circuit 80 includes a controller 32, a multiplexer 34, a cycle addition/deletion circuit 36, and a frequency measurement circuit 38.

For this type of PLL, self-test should be initiated only after the 'Lock' condition is detected. When the Lock condition is detected (step 82), controller 32 enables the feedback with a 90° phase shift by applying a logic high (step 84) to the control input of multiplexer 34 to select the feedback clock instead of the input clock. The controller then waits (step 85) a sufficient number of cycles for the output frequency to settle. After the pause, the controller counts VCO output cycles for 5J feedback cycles and then stores the number of cycles counted as count1 (step 86).

Next, the controller starts a new count (step 88) and changes the feedback phase shift to 0° for J cycles (step 90). At the end of the J cycles, the controller

again pauses (step 92) for another predetermined number of cycles, such as 4J cycles, and then stops counting and stores the final count as count2 (step 94). J is an integer whose value may be 32, for example, (J is shown as 6 in Figure 5 to simplify the illustration). The feedback clock made is the same as (or inverted relative to) the clock fed back into the phase comparator within the PLL, and therefore the phase difference becomes approximately zero (180°). However, since the normal phase difference for the Exor-type PLL is typically 90° in the center of the PLL frequency range, the output of the phase comparator becomes a continuous logic low (or logic high), as shown in Figure 5, and the low pass filter output voltage begins to fall (or rise), which causes the output frequency to decrease (or increase). The normal input is re-enabled via the multiplexer 34 and the Loop GBW product is determined (step 96). It can be shown that the GBW product is proportional to the difference between the two counts, count1 and count2, multiplied by the ratio of J/N.

For a PLL with a low value for loop GBW, J can be a large integer to ensure that sufficient frequency deviation occurs. For a PLL with a high value for loop GBW, the value of J should not be so large as to allow time for the low pass filter (LPF) output to reach a constant value. The resolution of the output is equal to $\frac{1}{4}$, so small values of J should be also be avoided. An alternative way to accommodate high values of loop GBW and a sufficiently large value for J is to feedback a clock whose phase has been shifted by some value between 0° and 90°. For example, 45° is an easily generated value in some cases. Alternatively, a constant delay can be used to provide a different phase shift, such as that provided by a combinational logic gate whose delay can be measured using other means.

Measurement of Lock Range

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Reference will now be made to the Flow Diagram in Figure 7 which illustrates a procedure for measuring the frequency lock range of a PLL containing a charge-pump phase comparator. The circuitry described earlier with reference to Figure 3 for measuring loop GBW can be used for lock range measurement, with modifications to controller 32 only to implement the different sequence.

The procedure can begin immediately after a value of $DF_0=(f_2-f_1)-(f_1-f_0)$ is determined in the Loop-GBW procedure illustrated in **Figure 4**. Then, another cycle is deleted (or added) (step **98**) and the VCO frequency is measured again (step **100**), as f_3 . Next, the value $DF=(f_3-f_2)-(f_1-f_0)$ is determined and compared to DF_0

(steps **102** and **104**, respectively) If the value of DF is within some range of DF₀, for example within a factor of two, then the GBW is decreasing (or increasing) sufficiently linearly. Cycles are continually deleted (or added) (loop **106**) until the value of DF is no longer within range of DF₀, at which time the GBW is assumed to be nearing saturation or a very non-linear region of operation, and hence the lock range limit has been exceeded. At this point the procedure is terminated and the normal input is enabled (step **108**). The last frequency measured in the linear region is the lower (or upper) limit of the frequency lock range (step **110**).

A significant advantage of this procedure is that only a constant frequency or data rate needs to be applied to the PLL by external test equipment, which greatly simplifies the test equipment and test program, reducing test development time and cost of testing.

Measurement of Lock Range for Exor-type PLL

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Figure 8 is a flow chart which illustrates a procedure for measuring the frequency lock range of a PLL containing an Exor gate phase comparator. The circuitry shown in Figure 4 described earlier for measuring loop GBW can be used for lock range measurement, with modifications to only controller 32 to implement the different sequence.

As in the GBW measurement, a nominal frequency clock or data is applied to the PLL input, and after phase lock is achieved, the 90° phase shifted output is feedback into the PLL via multiplexer 34, so that the duty cycle at the output of the Exor gate internal to the PLL becomes 50%. A short settling time may be required for the VCO output frequency to become stable, and proportional to the 50% duty-cycle.

Next, for C cycles out of every M cycles of the feedback signal (loop 112), the phase shift is changed to 0° (or 180°) which causes the PLL output frequency to decrease (or increase). C and M are integers, and C is increased from 0 to M-1, where M is, for example, 8. The output of the Exor gate will then have an average duty cycle of 50%-100%xC/M (or 50%+100xC/M).

The frequency f_c is measured (step 114) each time C is increased. The value of DF= f_c - f_{c-1} is determined (step 116) and compared (step 118) to DF₁= f_1 - f_0 . If the value of DF is within some range to DF₁, for example within a factor or two, then the GBW is decreasing (or increasing) sufficiently linearly. C is increased (step 120)

until the value of DF is no longer within range of DF₁, at which time the GBW is assumed to be nearing saturation or a very non-linear region of operation, and hence the lock range limit has been exceeded. At this point the procedure is terminated and the normal input is enabled (step 122). The last frequency measured in the linear region is the lower (or upper) limit of the frequency lock range (step 124), i.e. the lock range is f_{c-1} .

Measurement of Parameters which affect Bit Error Rate

Using a circuit such as that shown in **Figure 9**, which is similar to circuitry described for testing loop GBW of an exor-type PLL (**Figure 5**), it is possible to adjust the phase error for selected bits in the data stream. By increasing the phase error used to detect bits in a noise-free data stream until bit errors are induced, it is possible to determine how much inherent phase error and noise is present in the detection circuitry and thus to estimate the BER that would occur without any induced phase error. For a noise-free data stream, the BER is typically too small to measure economically, so the method of the present invention can save considerable time and expense.

As was demonstrated for testing loop GBW, deleting (or adding) one or more sequential clock cycles has the same effect as a step increase in phase error (see the waveforms of Figure 6), and causes the PLL to respond in a way which reduces the phase error, i.e. the integrator or LPF output decreases (or increases) at a rate determined by the loop GBW. As soon as the clock cycles are no longer deleted, the integrator or LPF output increases (or decreases) to its original value, but at a slower rate. This rate was measured in the loop GBW test for the exor-type PLL. The clock cycle immediately following the Jth clock pulse deleted will have a predictable phase error, and this phase error will increase for each subsequent clock cycle as long as clock cycles are being deleted. Using this principle, precise increments in phase error can be introduced. An example process which uses this principle will now be described with reference to Figures 9, 10 and 14.

Before initiating the process, an input data stream **130** is applied as stimulus to the PLL, which is in a closed-loop mode. The input data stream may be a pseudo random bit stream (PRBS), alternating 1's and 0's, or a clock. Bit errors are detected by conventional means. For example, **Figure 14** shows a P-bit (e.g. P=8) linear feedback shift register (LFSR) serially loaded with the received data, which is

presumed to be temporarily error-free, and then data is fed back within the LFSR which causes a correctly initiated PRBS to be continually generated for comparison with the received PRBS. Any comparisons which reveal a difference are counted by a BER counter. Typically, P is 8, 12, or 16, but, if the data is simple alternating 1's and 0's, then P is 1.

As indicated in more detail below, the input data stream is interrupted so as to delete J cycles. This causes the phase error of the PLL output to increase relative to the data stream. The values of J, a BER counter, and x, a subscript for each BER count, are initialized (step 132) to zero. J is the number of sequential cycles which are deleted. A process cycle counter, K, is set to 1. Controller 32 then executes loop 134 to confirm that the PLL frequency is in range or that the 'Lock' signal is present.

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When the data stream is a clock or alternating 1's and 0's (which is a half speed clock), the data stream may be used to clock the circuit which deletes cycles. When the data stream is a PRBS, the PLL output clock may be used to clock the circuit which deletes (or adds) cycles; in this case, as phase error increases, a non-integer number of cycles (bits) will be deleted.

With particular reference to **Figure 10**, the process involves the following sequence of steps:

First, J data stream cycles are deleted (step 136), and, if there is a bit error at the end of the Jth cycle (step 138), the BER counter is incremented (step 140). This step is followed by a pause (step 142) of approximately 4J clock cycles, during which no cycle deletion occurs and phase lock is regained. If the number of sequences K has not reached its maximum preset value (step 144), K_{max} which may be 1,000 for example, loop 146, comprising steps 136, 138 and 142, is repeated.

When K reaches K_{max} , BER₀ is checked to determine if it exceeds a predetermined value (step 148), such as 1. If it does not, J is incremented (step 150), K is reset to 1 (step 152), and BER_x is set to zero (step 154). A loop 156, comprising steps 136, 138, 142, 144 and 148, is repeated.

If at step 148, BER $_0$ is found to exceed the predetermined value, the value of the BER counter output is recorded (step 158) as BER $_x$, checked to determine whether it has reached a maximum preset BER $_{max}$ (step 159) and, if it has not, x is incremented at 160, and then loop 156 is repeated. If BER $_x$ has reached its maximum, the process is terminated at 162 where the BER for J=0 is determined.

The BER can be estimated by appropriately extrapolating the values of BER (BER $_0$, BER $_1$, ...) versus **J** (J $_0$, J $_1$, ...) to the point where J=0 using any of various mathematical relationships that have been published relating phase error to BER. Alternatively, the BER values can be compared to BER values measured in several manufactured units of the IC whose true BER for J=0 and whose BER for other values of **J** is known. For example, if the in-system BER for one unit of the IC is measured as BER $_0$, and the BER for another unit is BER $_0$, and then the values of BER versus **J** for each unit are measured, the relationship can then be calculated between in-system BER and the extrapolated value of BER versus **J**.

Many variations on this method are possible. For example, less than a full pulse can be deleted each time, as previously described for loop GBW measurement. This allows smaller increments in phase error, but requires N>2 to ensure that sufficient clock edges are available to create a synchronous phase delay.

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Further, a phase error, C clock cycles after pulse deletion (or addition) ceases, can be used – this phase error will decrease more gradually than when cycles were being deleted, and thus allow smaller phase steps. C is increased each time that loop 156 is repeated, instead of increasing J.

Measurement of Jitter and Phase Error

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Another important parameter of a PLL is the output clock phase jitter relative to an ideal clock. In the method described herein, jitter is measured relative to the input clock or data, either of which is assumed to be jitter free.

In accordance with the method of the present invention, Jitter is measured by introducing a progressively increasing delay into the PLL input while monitoring the PLL output for incorrect bits and determining (a) the value of the delay at which detected bits cease to be continuously correct and (b) the value of the delay at which a predetermined number of detected bits are incorrect. The difference between the two values is equal to the peak-to-peak Jitter. Figure 12 illustrates a circuit 170 which can be used to measure Jitter and Figure 13 is a flow diagram illustrating a procedure for measuring Jitter.

With reference to Figure 12, circuit 170 includes controller 32, a delay mechanism 171, a latch (or D-type flip-flop) 172, a BER counter 174, a frequency counter 176 and a multiplexer 178. Delay mechanism 171 may be in the form of a series non-inverting logic gates such as is shown at 216 in Figure 13. The normal input 180 to the PLL 10 is a reference clock, a PRBS or alternating 1's and 0's which is input to the controller and to the input of delay mechanism 171. The outputs of counters 174 and 176 are fed back to the controller, as shown. The output 182 of the PLL is also fed back to the low input of multiplexer 178, the output of which is applied to the input of a tapped delay mechanism 183 the output of which is input to the clock input of latch 172. Tapped delay mechanism 183, illustrated in Figure 13 and described later., is controlled by controller 32. Delay mechanism 171 introduces a constant delay into the PLL output and a delayed output data stream 184 is delivered to the input of the PLL and to the data input of latch 172. The output of the latch is connected to BER counter 174.

Referring to **Figure 11**, initially, a nominal frequency stimulus is applied to the PLL (step **186**) and the PLL is permitted to achieve a 'lock' condition (loop **188**). Concurrently, a number of variables are initialized as shown at **190** and the delayed output data stream **184** is connected to the data input of latch **172**. A delay is then introduced into the data stream at **192** and then the PLL is allowed to free run. The delay may be achieved by seeding an N-bit LFSR (not shown) with incoming data. BER counter **174** then counts the number of bit errors, **B**, in **K** consecutive cycles of the PLL output (step **194**) and outputs the results to controller **32**. The controller

then determines whether B is less than a predetermined value, Low, (step 196) and, if so, increases the delay by a value, delta, (step 198) and then repeats steps 194 and 196. If B is greater than Low, controller 32 performs a reference delay measurement to obtain D_{Low} (step 200). The controller then determines at 202 whether B is less than another predetermined value, High, and, if so, increases the delay by a value, delta, at step 198 and then repeats steps 194 and 196. If B exceeds the value High, the controller performs a reference delay measurement to obtain D_{High} at step 204. With the values of D_{Low} and D_{High}, it is possible to determine Jitter at 206 by determining the difference between the two values. The Jitter can be compared at step 208 against some predetermined value to determine whether the circuit passes or fails.

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The sequence, just described, is a linear search for the time range limits of the jitter. Other searches, such as a binary search, could be used. The delay difference obtained can be measured using any of several schemes, for example, by inserting the delay into an oscillating loop and measuring the resulting increase in oscillation period: **Figure 12** shows this circuitry in dashed outline as an example. When the stimulus bit stream is alternating 1's and 0's, D_{High} will be 100% of the number of bits counted. When the stimulus bit stream is a PRBS, D_{High} will be some predictable number less than 100%, since many adjacent bits in the PRBS will be identical and hence a one-bit delay will not appear to cause an error. The value of D_{High} for a particular PRBS is equal to the number of bit errors that would result if the PRBS were compared to itself delayed by one bit interval.

To insert delay into an oscillating loop, a circuit such as that shown using dashed lines in **Figure 12** is used. An offset delay **171** is provided to allow jitter measurement in the presence of zero or negative inherent phase error.

The definition of "continuous", as used in the preceding description can be adjusted by the circuit designer. For example, continuous could mean a duration of 1024 bits. The duration should be an integer multiple of the PRBS length. Lower numbers allow faster tests but may not detect a low frequency jitter.

Another measure of jitter is the time range in which X% of the jitter occurs. For example, if X=80, then the jitter delay range would be from 10% to 90%, corresponding to a range from 102 bits in error to 918 bits in error out of 1024 bits. To accomplish this measurement, each time the delay is increased, the number of errored bits is compared to a programmable limit or shifted off-chip.

It is preferable to measure jitter for a pseudo-random bit sequence (PRBS) since it is more representative of typical data. The data stream is generated using an LFSR with P bits, on-chip or off-chip, filtered by a transmitter filter and a receiver filter and then sampled using latch 172 (or D-type flip-flop) which is clocked by the PLL output. The output of the latch is compared against the correct value to check for bit errors. The correct value can be obtained typically using a second P-bit LFSR which is the same as the transmit LFSR but is bit-synchronized to the received data stream. As previously mentioned, bit synchronizing is accomplished by loading in any series of P bits which are error free.

Figure 13 illustrates an example tapped delay line 210 which includes a binary counter 212, a multiplexer 214 and a series of taps 216. The input signal is applied to the first tap and the desired tap count is applied to the counter 212. The output of the multiplexer is a signal having the desired delay.

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Figure 14 illustrates an example of a BER counter which includes a linear feedback shift register 218, a binary counter 220, an output register 222 and combinational logic.

Figure 15 illustrates the frequency measurement circuit 38 for measuring frequency. The circuit includes a 2^R divider 224, which receives a known frequency, an AND gate 226 which receives the frequency to be measured and the output of the divider, a binary counter 228 which receives the output of the AND gate and of the divider, and an output register 230 which receives the output of the counter and of the divider and outputs the new frequency of the PLL.

Figure 16 illustrates a cycle deletion circuit 36 which can be used for cycle elimination. The circuit includes two D-type latches 232 and 234 and combinational logic, including a pair of AND gates 236 and 238. The input clock is applied to AND gate 238 which produces a new output clock signal. When a 'delete' input is applied to latch 232, the circuit substitutes a logic low for a logic high in the input clock signal.

Figure 17 illustrates a circuit 240 which is adapted to perform either cycle deletion or cycle addition. The circuit includes three D-type latches 242, 244 and 246 and combinational logic 248. It is believed that the operation of the circuit will be apparent to a person skilled in this art and, accordingly, the operation is not be described herein.

It will be seen that the foregoing has described circuitry and processes for measuring various parameters of PLLs, including loop GBW, lock range, BER, Jitter, and phase offset, without connecting to the internal components of the PLL. While individual circuits have been described and illustrate for determining these parameters, it will be understood that the individual circuits can and normally would be combined into a single BIST circuit capable of performing all of the required measurements.

It will also be understood that the present invention is not limited to the specific circuits described and illustrated and that various other modifications and alterations may be made thereto by persons skilled in the art without departing from the spirit of the invention defined in the appended claims.

We Claim:

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1. A circuit for measuring a phase locked loop (PLL) having an input, an output and a lock range, the circuit comprising:

means for providing a stimulus signal whose frequency is within the lock range of the PLL;

means for deriving one or more alternative signals from a feedback signal path of the PLL;

means for temporarily connecting said one or more alternative signals to the input of the PLL;

means for measuring an output frequency of the PLL; and
means, responsive to a condition in which the PLL output frequency is within
the lock range, for determining a parameter proportional to a change in the PLL
output frequency caused by temporarily applying any of said alternative signals to
the input of the PLL.

- 2. A circuit according to claim 1, wherein said means for deriving being operable to derive an alternative signal which is equal in frequency and phase to an internal feedback to a phase comparator in the PLL, further including means for replacing a selected number of cycles of said alternative signal by a logic high or logic low, and after replacing said selected number of cycles, said measuring means being operable to measure a resulting average output frequency, a change in frequency being proportional to a loop gain-bandwidth for the PLL and to the number of cycles replaced.
- 3. A circuit according to claim 1, wherein said means for deriving being operable to derive an alternative signal which is equal in frequency and phase to an internal feedback signal applied to a phase comparator in the PLL, but having a selected number of cycles replaced by cycles having a phase offset, and, said means for measuring being operable to measure a resulting average output frequency during a time interval, a change in frequency being proportional to a loop gain-bandwidth for the PLL, to the number of cycles replaced, and to said phase offset.

- 4. A circuit according to claim 3, further including means for comparing a parameter with one or more stored values to determine whether the PLL passes or fails.
- 5. A circuit according to claim 1, wherein said means for deriving being operable to derive an alternative signal which is equal in frequency and phase to an internal feedback to a phase comparator in the PLL, but having a selected number of cycles replaced by a signal having a phase offset relative to said internal feedback signal, and, after replacing said selected number of cycles, said measuring means being operable to measure a resulting average output frequency, a change in frequency being proportional to a loop gain-bandwidth for the PLL and to the number of cycles replaced.
- 6. A circuit according to claim 1, wherein said means for deriving being operable to derive an alternative signal which is equal in frequency but has equal or opposite phase to the internal feedback to a phase comparator in the PLL for a selected number of cycles of the signal; said measuring means being operable to measure PLL output frequency during these cycles and during a time interval afterwards; a change in average frequency relative to the frequency of said stimulus signal being proportional to a loop gain-bandwidth for the PLL and to said selected number of cycles.
- 7. A circuit according to claim 1, wherein said means for deriving being operable to derive an alternative signal that is equal in frequency but that has a phase offset relative to an internal feedback to a phase comparator in the PLL for a selected number of cycles of the signal; said measuring means being operable to measure PLL output frequency during these cycles and during a time interval afterwards; a change in average frequency relative to the frequency of the stimulus signal being proportional to a loop gain-bandwidth for the PLL, said selected number of cycles, and said phase offset.

- 8. A circuit according to claim 3, further including means for determining a change in frequency caused by said alternative signal, but without replaced cycles, during a time period equal to a time period for frequency measurement in which cycles are replaced, and subtracting a change in frequency thus determined from a change in frequency measured when cycles are replaced to account for any error introduced by the circuit.
 - 9. A circuit according to claim 8, further including means for comparing a resulting subtracted value with one or more stored values to determine whether the PLL passes or fails.
 - **10.** A circuit according to claim **1**, wherein said stimulus signal is data which is meaningful information, random, or pseudo random.
- 11. A circuit according to claim 1, further including means for determining the frequency lock range when connected to a maximum required input frequency, said means for determining connecting one of said alternative signals, periodically deleting cycles and measuring PLL output frequency until a minimum output frequency is measured, and determining that the PLL fails when a required minimum output frequency is not achieved.
- 12. A circuit according to claim 1, further including means for determining a frequency lock range when connected to a minimum required input frequency, said means for determining connecting one of said alternative signals, periodically connecting another of said alternative signals of higher frequency, and measuring PLL output frequency until a maximum output frequency is measured; and determining that the PLL fails when a required maximum output frequency is not measured.

- 13. A circuit according to claim 1, further including means for determining a frequency lock range when connected to a stimulus signal with any frequency within the lock range of the PLL, said means for determining connecting one of said alternative signals, periodically deleting cycles and measuring PLL output frequency until a minimum output frequency is measured, stop deleting cycles, periodically adding pulses and measuring PLL output frequency until a maximum output frequency is measured, and determining that the PLL fails when a required maximum or minimum output frequency is not measured.
 - 14. A circuit according to claim 1, further including means for determining a lock range when connected to a nominal input frequency, said means for determining connecting an alternative signal which has a negative phase offset, measuring PLL output frequency until a minimum output frequency is measured, connecting said nominal input frequency, connecting an alternative signal which has a positive phase offset, measuring PLL output frequency until a maximum output frequency is achieved, and determining that the PLL fails when a required maximum or minimum output frequency is not measured.
 - 15. A circuit according to claim 1, further including means for automatically initiating a test, in test mode, as soon as phase-lock is detected by conventional means.
 - **16.** A circuit according to claim **1**, further including means for automatically initiating a test, in test mode, as soon as the PLL output frequency is within a specified range of input frequency, as determined by said means for measuring an output frequency of the PLL.

- **17.** A circuit for measuring a PLL having an input, an output and a lock range, the circuit comprising:
- means for providing a stimulus signal whose frequency is within the lock range of the PLL;
- means for connecting a delay **T1** to said stimulus signal to produce a **T1**-delayed signal;
 - means for latching the level of said *T1*-delayed signal after a programmable delay *T2* whenever the PLL output signal has a transition;

means for measuring the amount that delay T2 changes;

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- wherein phase jitter, defined as a time interval between times *X1* and *X2* at which cumulative probability of a signal transition has probabilities *Y1* and *Y2*, respectively, is measured as follows:
 - connecting delay 71 to the stimulus signal of the PLL input;
 - after the output of the PLL becomes phase-locked to the stimulus signal, adjusting delay *T2* using an algorithmic search routine until a number of correct latched levels divided by a total number of latched levels within a time interval *T* is equal to *Y1*;
 - measuring a value of *T2* using said means for measuring the amount that delay *T2* changes;
 - adjusting delay **72** using an algorithmic search routine until said number of correct latched levels divided by said total number of latched levels within in a time interval **7** is equal to **Y2**; and
 - measuring the amount by which delay *T2* increased using said means for measuring the amount that delay *T2* changes; this amount being approximately equal to *X2–X1* which is the phase jitter.
 - 18. A circuit according to claim 17, further including means for comparing a resulting measured amount that delay *T2* changed with one or more stored values for determining whether the PLL passes or fails.

- 19. A circuit according to claim 17, wherein said means for measuring the amount that delay *T2* changes comprises a ring oscillator, which temporarily includes delay *T2*, a change in oscillation period of said ring oscillator being equal to the change in delay *T2*.
- 20. A circuit according to claim 19, further including means for comparing a resulting measured change in delay *T2* with one or more stored values to determine whether the PLL passes or fails.
- 21. A circuit according to claim 17, said programmable delay 72 comprises a series chain of logic gates having an input for a signal to be delayed, said circuit further including a multiplexer for selecting any number of logic gates in series in said series chain and having an output for outputting a delayed signal.
- 22. A circuit according to claim 21, each logic gate of said series chain of logic gates being connected to an input of said multiplexer so that said multiplexer has slightly different inherent delays for each of its inputs, so that delay increments less than a delay of a fastest logic gate available in a logic gate technology are selectable by selecting different inputs of said multiplexer.
 - 23. A circuit according to claim 17, said time interval *T* being equal to a number of periods of said stimulus signal or of said PLL output, said circuit further including a digital counter for counting said number of periods.
- 24. A circuit according to claim 17, wherein a mean phase error is determined by adjusting delay T2 using an algorithmic search routine until said number of correct latched levels divided by said total number of latched levels, in time interval T, is equal to an average of maximum and minimum possible values; measuring delay T2 using said means of measuring changes in T2; measuring delay T1 using the same means; and the mean phase error is approximately equal to T2-T1.

- 25. A circuit according to claim 24, further including means for comparing a resulting mean phase error with one or more stored values for determining whether the PLL passes or fails.
- 26. A circuit according to claim 17, wherein said stimulus signal is data which is meaningful information, random, or pseudo random.
- 27. A circuit for testing a phase locked loop (PLL) having an output, comprising: means for providing a stimulus signal having frequency within a lock range of the PLL;
- means for replacing one or more consecutive data bits or clock cycles of the stimulus signal with a logic value;
- means for measuring bit errors by comparing an expected value with a latched value of the stimulus signal;
- wherein, after the PLL output is phase-locked to the stimulus signal;
 - J bits or cycles of the signal are replaced by the logic value, causing a PLL phase shift, and after these bits or cycles, the value of said stimulus signal is latched C bits or cycles after the replacement has ceased;
 - after phase-lock is re-gained, **J** bits or cycles are again replaced by said logic value, and again the stimulus value is latched **C** bits or cycles later;
- repeating this procedure *K* times;

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- recording the total number of times that an incorrect value was latched within K latched values of a bit error rate (BER) for the specific value of J; incrementing J and repeating the procedure to record another BER; incrementing J until the BER exceeds a pre-set maximum value; and determining BER for J=0 having no induced phase error by extrapolating from non-zero values of BER obtained with non-zero values of J.
- 28. A circuit according to claim 27, further including means for comparing a measured *BER* value with one or more stored values to determine whether the PLL passes or fails.

- 29. A method of measuring a phase locked loop (PLL) using a circuit according to claim 1, comprising:
- testing a lock range by providing a nominal input frequency and waiting until the PLL locks;
- 5 connecting one of said alternative signals which has an equal frequency and a 90° shifted phase relative to said nominal input frequency;
 - out of every M cycles, substituting C cycles which have a phase shift of 0° or 180°, where C is an integer between 0 and M-1;
- recording a change in frequency following each substitution, until the change in

 frequency becomes too little or too much relative to a predetermined value;

 and
 - measuring PLL output frequency, the output frequency being approximately equal to a lower or upper limit of the PLL frequency lock range.
 - 30. A method of measuring a phase locked loop (PLL) having an input, an output, and a lock range, said method comprising the steps of: applying a stimulus signal having a frequency within said lock range to said input; deriving alternative signals from a feedback signal path of the PLL;
- temporarily connecting or comparing any of said alternative signals to said PLL input; measuring output frequency of the PLL or of a comparison while connecting or comparing each of said alternative signals; and
 - determining one or more PLL parameters from a change in said output frequency or in a delay used to cause said change in output frequency.
 - 31. A method according to claim 30, further including comparing each resulting parameter with one or more respective stored values to determine whether the PLL passes or fails.
 - **32.** A method according to claim **30**, said step of determining one or more PLL parameters including determining a product of loop gain and loop bandwidth of the PLL by measuring a change in PLL output frequency caused by temporarily connecting one or more of said derived signals to the input of the PLL.

- 33. A method according to claim 30, said step of deriving an alternative signal including adding or deleting one or more cycles from said alternative signal.
- 34. A method of testing a phase locked loop (PLL) having an input, an output and a lock range, by determining a parameter proportional to a Loop Gain-bandwidth, said method comprising the steps of:
- applying a stimulus signal whose frequency is within the lock range of the PLL to said input;
- applying an alternative signal derived from a feedback signal path of the PLL to said input in place of said stimulus signal;
- measuring the frequency of the output of the PLL during a first time interval and recording said frequency as a first frequency;
- measuring the frequency of the output of the PLL during a second time interval and recording said frequency as a second frequency;
 - adding or deleting one cycle from said alternative signal;

- measuring the frequency of the output of the PLL during a third time interval and recording said frequency as a third frequency;
- determining a first change in frequency by determining the difference between said first and second frequencies and determining a second change in frequency by determining the difference between said second and third frequencies, the Loop Gain-bandwidth being proportional to the difference between said first and second changes in frequency; and
- 20 comparing said difference against one or more predetermined values to determine whether said PLL passes or fails.

- **35.** A method of testing a phase locked loop (PLL) having an input, an output and a lock range, by determining a parameter proportional to a Loop Gain-bandwidth, said method comprising the steps of:
- applying a stimulus signal whose frequency is within the lock range of the PLL to said input;
- applying to said input in place of said stimulus signal an alternative signal derived from an internal feedback signal path of the PLL and having a 90° phase shift with respect to said stimulus signal;
- counting the number of output cycles of the output of said PLL during a first

 predetermined number of cycles and storing the number of cycles counted as
 a first count;
 - changing the phase shift of said alternative signal to 0° and starting a new count of the output cycles of said PLL;
 - allowing the PLL to settle during a second predetermined number of cycles;
- 15 stopping said counting and recording the count as a second count;

- determining the difference between said first and second counts, the loop gainbandwidth being proportional to the difference between said first and second counts; and
- comparing the difference against one or more predetermined values to determine
 whether said PLL passes or fails.
 - **36.** A circuit for measuring a phase locked loop (PLL) having an input, an output, and a lock range, said circuit comprising:
 - means for applying to said input a stimulus signal whose frequency is within the lock range of the PLL;
 - 5 means for deriving alternative signals from a feedback path of the PLL;
 - means for connecting any of said alternative signals to the input of the PLL;
 - means for comparing any of said alternative signals to the input signal of the PLL and counting a frequency of errors;
 - means for measuring PLL output frequency;
- 10 means for determining one or more PLL parameters from a change in said output frequency; and
 - means for determining one or more PLL parameters from a delay used to change said frequency of errors.

- **37.** A circuit according to claim **36**, further including means for comparing each parameter with respective one or more stored values to determine whether the PLL passes or fails.
- **38.** A circuit according to claim **36**, said means for deriving an alternative signal including means for adding or deleting one or more cycles or partial cycles from said alternative signal.
- 39. A circuit according to claim 17, wherein delay *T1* is varied and measured instead of delay *T2*, and delay *T2* is constant.
- 40. A circuit according to claim 17, wherein either delay *T1* or delay *T2* is varied until the number of latched levels whose value is correct is not constant, and then only delay *T1* or delay *T2* is varied and measured to determine the phase jitter.

41.	A circuit for measuring a phase locked loop (PLL) having an input, an output
and a lock range, the circuit comprising:	
means	for providing a stimulus signal whose frequency is within said lock range;
means	for connecting a delay <i>T1</i> to a signal of the PLL to produce a <i>T1</i> -delayed

means for latching a level of the *T1*-delayed signal after a programmable delay *T2* whenever said PLL output has a transition;

means for measuring the amount that delay *T2* changes; wherein jitter, defined as a time interval between times *X1* and *X2* at which cumulative probability of a signal transition has probabilities *Y1* and *Y2*, respectively,

connecting delay *T1* to the stimulus signal of the PLL input; after the output of the PLL becomes phase-locked to the stimulus signal, adjusting delay *T2* using an algorithmic search routine until a number of correct latched levels divided by a total number of latched levels in a time interval *T* is equal to *Y1*;

- measuring the value of delay **72** using said means for measuring changes in the amount that delay **72** changes;
- adjusting delay **72** using an algorithmic search routine until said number of correct latched levels divided by said total number of latched levels in a time interval **7** is equal to **Y2**; and
- measuring the amount by which delay *T2* increased using said means for measuring the amount that delay *T2* changes which amount is approximately equal to *X2–X1* which is jitter of the PLL.

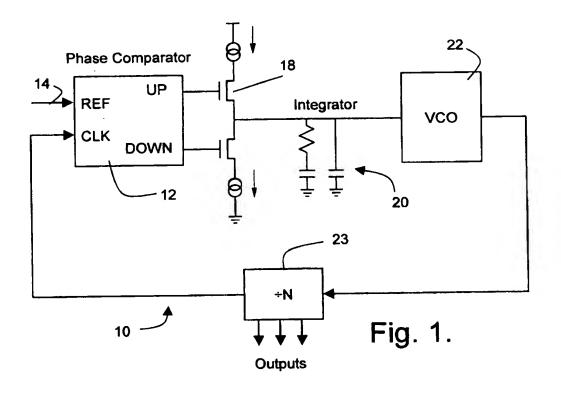
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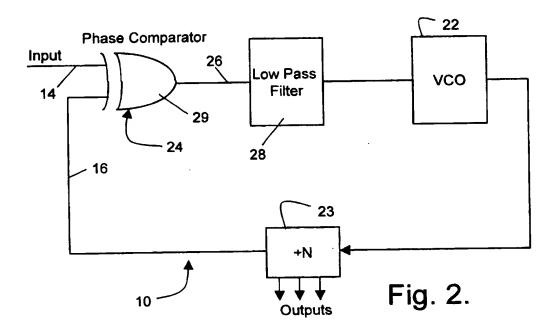
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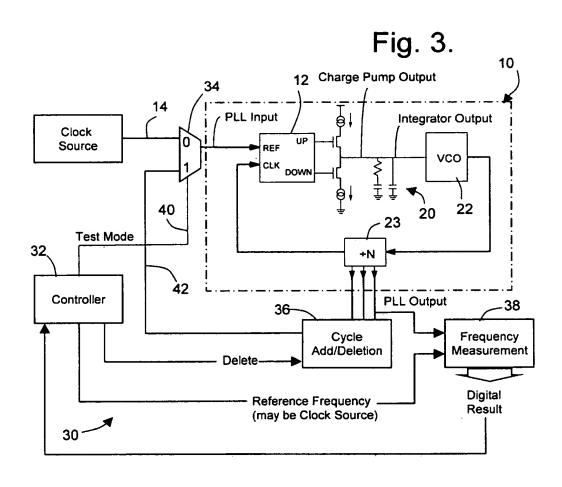
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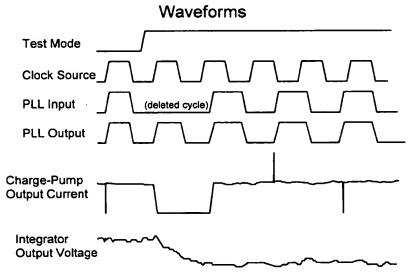
signal;

is measured as follows:









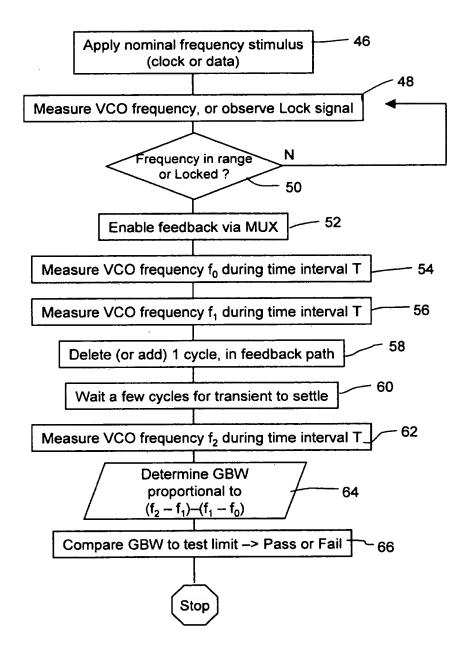
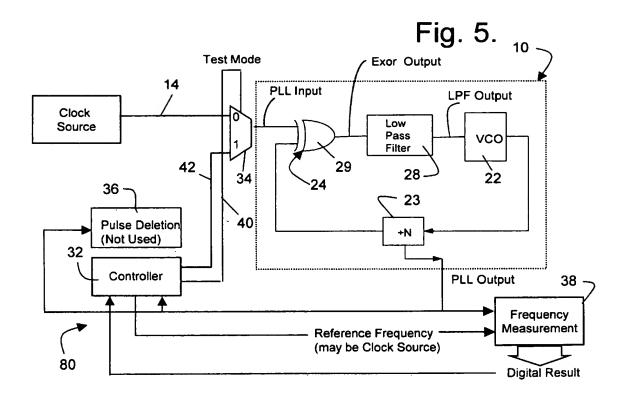
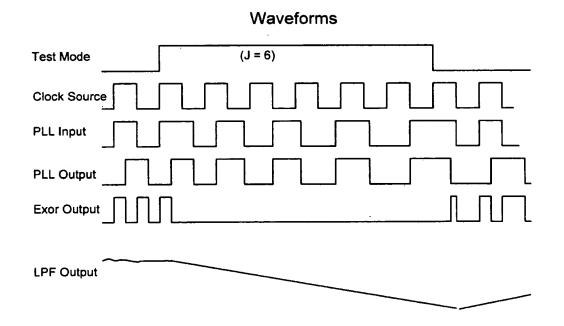


Fig. 4.





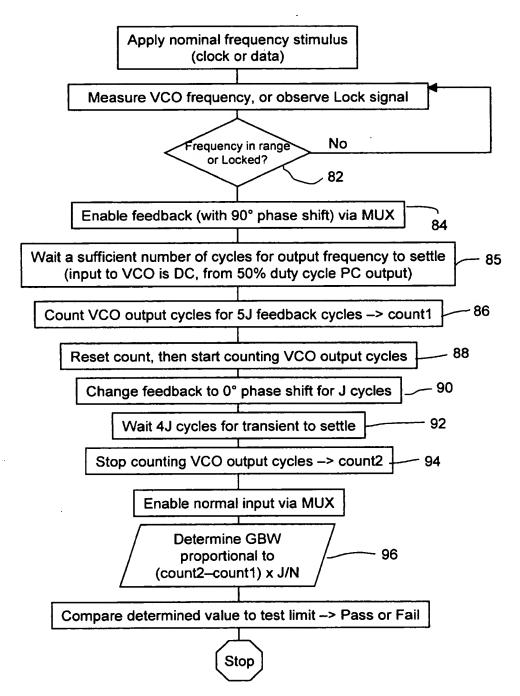
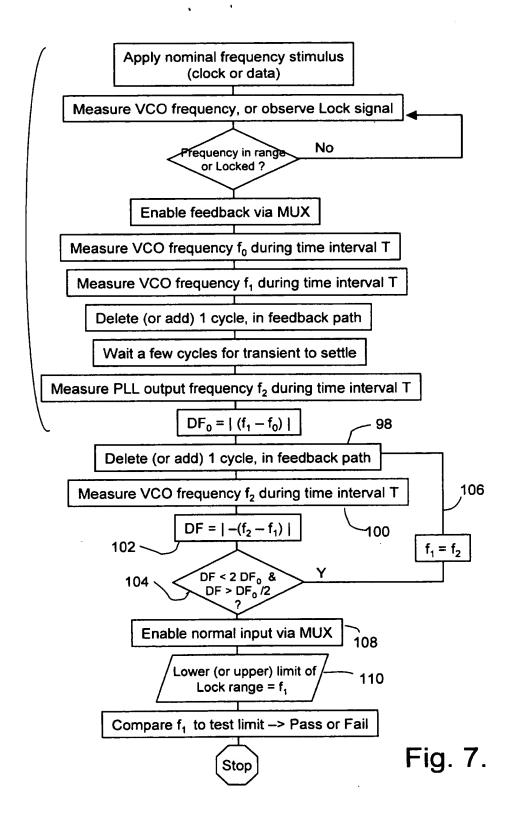
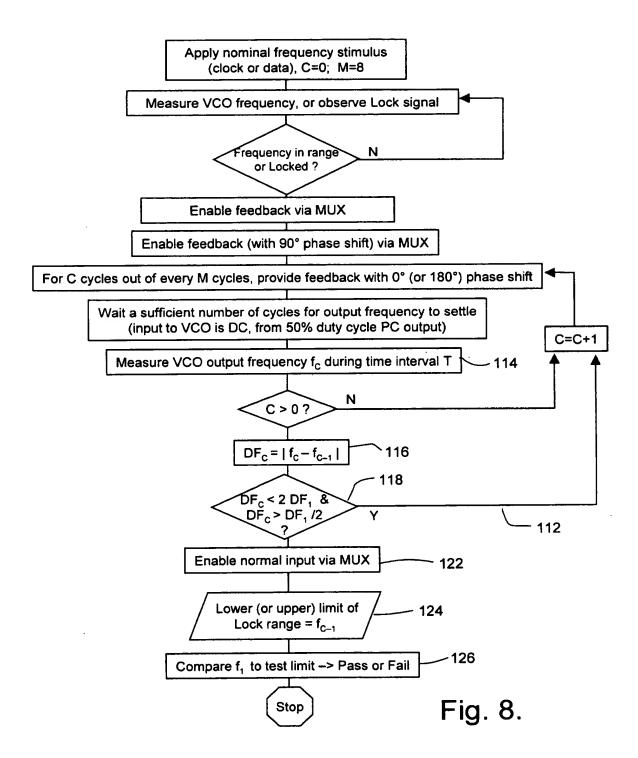
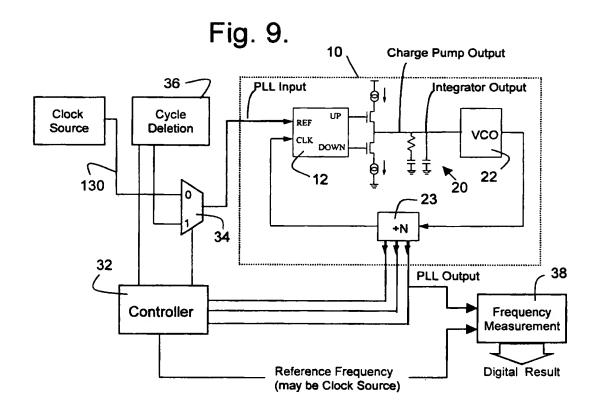


Fig. 6.

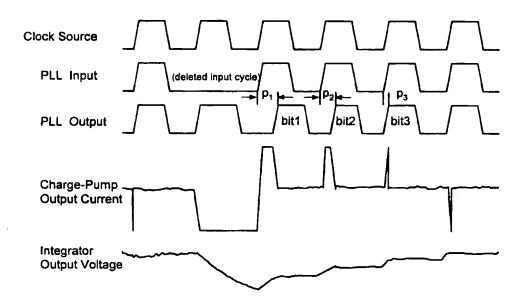


6 / 14

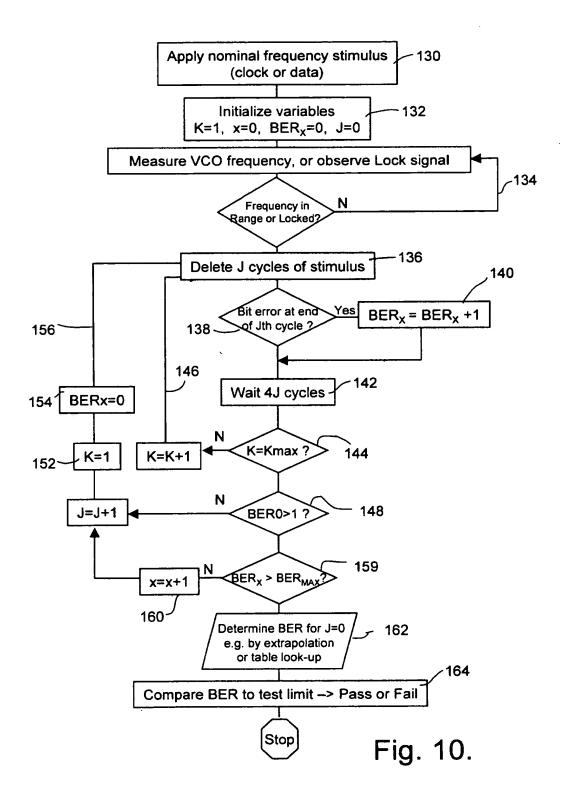




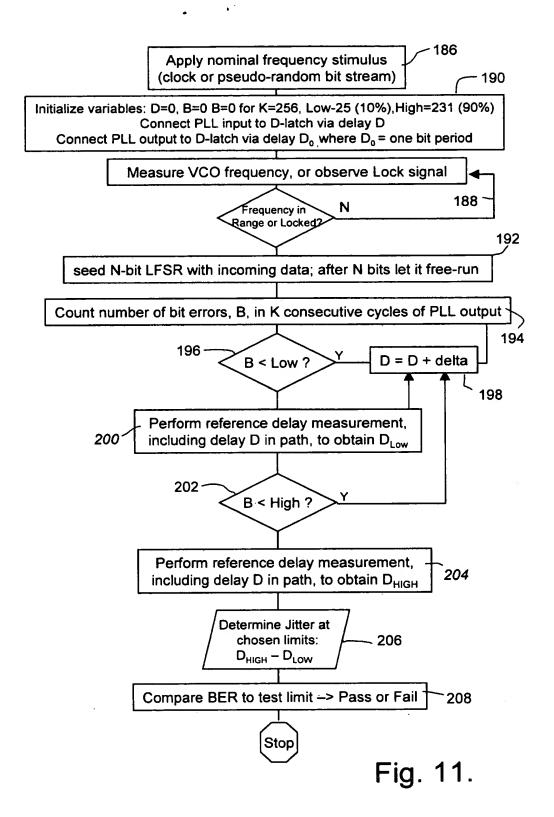
Waveforms

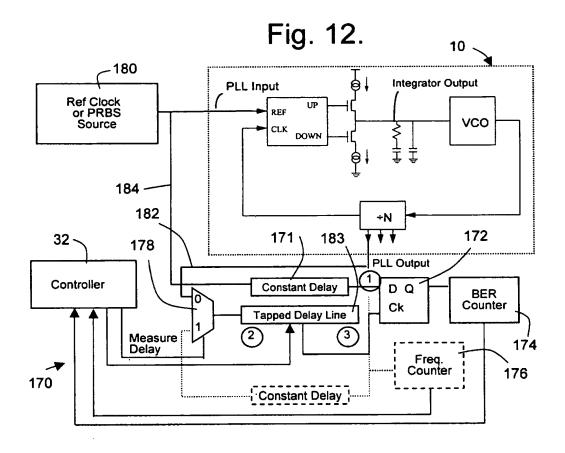


8 / 14



9 / 14





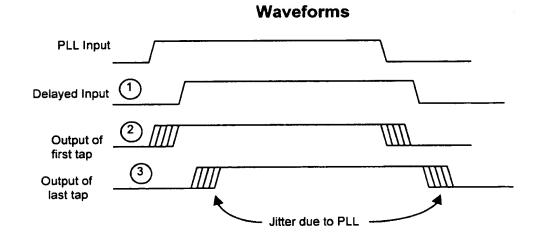
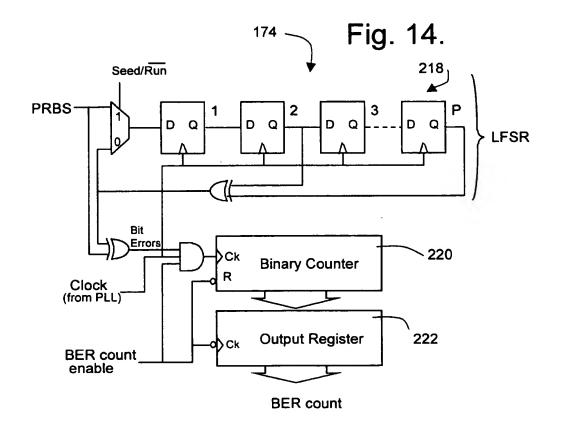
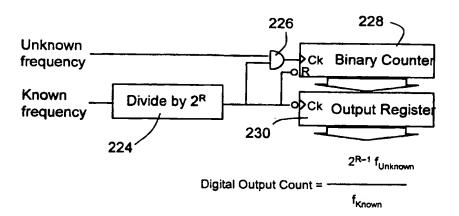


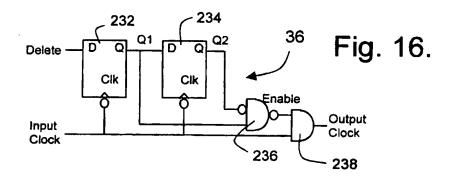
Fig. 13. 216 Digital Buffers (any non-inverting logic gates) first tap Last Tap Input-Binary **Digital Multiplexer** Counter Тар Select 214 output Increment 212 **Tap Count** 210



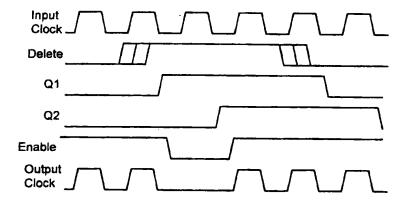
12 / 14

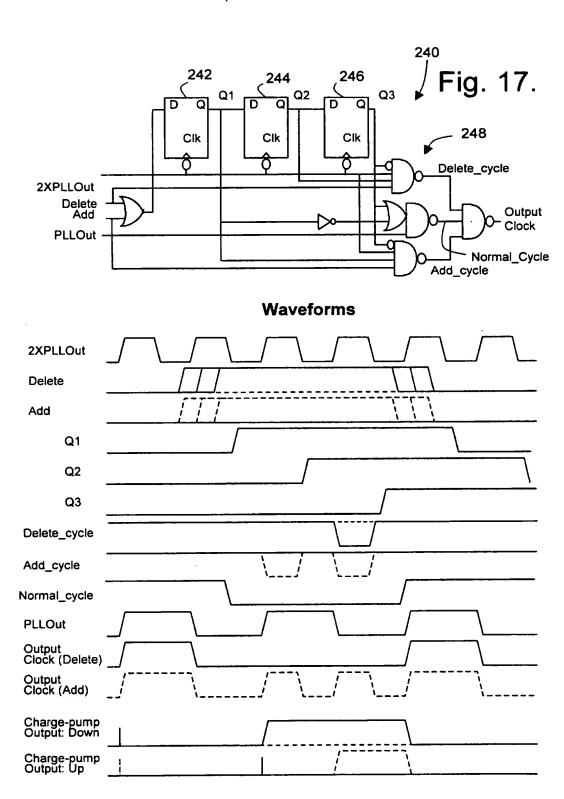
Fig. 15.





Waveforms





14 / 14